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Course Syllabi

Spring 2015

MMC 6402 Theories of Mass Communication

Robert E. Gutsche Jr.

School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Florida International University, rgutsche@fiu.edu

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MMC 6402
Theories of Mass Communication

School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Florida International University

Spring 2015
(Updated 1-8-15)
Wednesdays, 9:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.
Marine Science, 113

Dr. Robert Gutsche, Jr., Assistant Professor

318 A, Academic 2

608-345-0717 (cell)

rgutsche@fiu.edu

tedgutsche or Robert Gutsche (skype)

robertgutschejr.com

Individual workshop hours: Tuesday / Thursday 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., or by appointment

Course Overview & Theme

This class is built around two areas: Communication Theory and Cultural Theory as they apply to strategic communication of messages to specific audiences and with the intent of introducing students to academic research and application to the profession through community engagement. This class is heavy on writing, interacting with each other, and reading. Time management is a must. Readings will come from the books below, but each week may be supplemented with an example scholarly article that will provide recent information about the topics at hand and will guide students on how to prepare their own academic research paper at the end of the class. This class is also project-based and is aligned with eyesontherise.org, which is a grant-funded project related to sea level rise at SJMC. Furthermore, students in this course may find themselves grouped with SJMC undergraduates and MAST @ FIU high school students, as those in this course plan and measure messages associated with the project. The purpose of this project is to conduct research to guide an advertising and social marketing campaign to increase awareness about sea level rise in South Florida and change related behaviors. The work will be grounded in theories examined in the course.

Professional Values & Competencies:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble

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and petition for redress of grievances;

- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

Required Readings

A Transplanted Chicago: Race, Place, and the Press in Iowa City, Gutsche (2014), 0786473673, (Author royalties from this book will be donated to the Community Foundation of Johnson County [Iowa])

An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research Stacks and Salwen (2008), 0-8058-6382-6, (2nd Edition)

Media Control, Gutsche (will be supplied)

Media & Environment Lester (2010), 978-0-7456-4402-8

Other readings are required and identified in the syllabus. Articles can be located via the FIU Library Communication and Mass Media Complete database

Recommended Readings

High Tide on Main Street, Englander (2013), 9780615637952

Making the News, Salzman (2003), 0813340950

Grading

Class is about much more than grades. However, here is how I approach them. Grades are determined by letter grades, not points. As=Excellent work; Bs=Above Average work; Cs=Average work (this is where most people operate); Ds=Below Average work; Fs=Failure to Meet any Acceptable Standards. Be aware, attendance WILL result in failing grades. Also, check the minimum grade you will need not only to pass this class but to have it be considered for your degree / major / program.

Assignments

15 percent Feedback to Media Control and Application to Strategic Communication

Students will provide a copy-edited version of the manuscript and a three-page analysis and assessment of the arguments, evidence, etc. (Subject to change)

15 percent: Weekly Participation

Students will lead class discussions. All should bring questions or discussions that connect the readings with each other and should force the class to probe deeply into the concepts at hand.

40 percent: Weekly Strategic Communication Project Updates

Student groups will provide a two-page report each class period related to the project and their efforts from the previous week, as well as outlines for the following week.

30 percent: Communication Theory and Advertising and Audience Analysis Paper for eyesontherise.org

As follows:

1) Statement of Problem/Purpose: What is the conceptual focus of this paper? What concept within mass communication is it furthering? What cases will be used to illustrate the paper? What methods are you proposing?

2) Research Questions: What are the two major research questions that address the problem/purpose from above?

3) Annotated Literature Review/Conceptual Framework: List at least 10 academic studies (no more than two can have been published from before 2008) that you will use to construct the conceptual section of the paper? An annotated list is one that not only lists the journal/article information, but provides three or four sentences that explains the citation's overarching arguments, methods, and contribution to your proposed paper. The professor will respond to these proposals via email and students will be required to meet with the professor within one week after receiving feedback to make alterations and receive approval to proceed with the paper topic.

Project Methodology

Students must be expected to present to the class (and include in the final research paper and presentation) justification for which method they would employ. Such a justification demands citations, examples of previous such applications to similar topics, and details about potential participants or texts that would be analyzed.

Paper Findings

Students should use this section of the paper and presentation to surmise as to the findings and how such findings may influence their overall conceptualization of the paper.

Project Draft

Using each of the components above, altered and edited from professor and class feedback, this should be a completed first draft, not merely an extended outline, but an actual paper that provides the best work possible for further feedback that will be applied during revision.

Extra Credit

I do not give extra credit assignments

Attendance

It is a must. Attendance will be taken promptly at the beginning of class. Students have one free absence. Each absence after that will reduce the final grade by a half point. Students are also expected to stay for the entire course period and risk losing grade points for sporadic attendance. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class; therefore, if you are late, you will be marked absent. You must then tell me after class that you were there, and you will be marked tardy. **TWO TARDIES EQUATE TO AN ABSENCE.**

If you know of any conflicts that will make you late on a regular basis, please tell me. We will decide together whether you must change sections / drop class / make other arrangements. Your active participation in the class also contributes to the idea and action of attendance. Just showing up isn't enough, you must be an active member of the group. Finally, there will be no putting away books and papers before the end of class. We are all here until it is time to leave, and every minute of discussion and instruction is important.

- 1) It is your responsibility to get in touch with me within one business day in the event you qualify for a makeup exam or quiz, in order to be considered for makeup or to have a late assignment graded. Otherwise, all missed work receives a zero.
- 2) You must provide appropriate documentation. In the case of a medical emergency, you need a doctor or hospital note that says you could not attend class on that date. In the case of a death (family emergency), you need to provide something documenting the dates and your relationship to the deceased, such as an obituary or funeral program. Examples of unacceptable documentation include a note saying you were seen by a doctor or health center, airline tickets to a family event, etc. Other absences that will not count as excused include family events (wedding, family trip, etc.), conflicts with other classes or school related activities (such as grammar exams or reviews), car trouble, a work conflict or an internship obligation. Failure to provide appropriate documentation means the absence will not be excused.
- 3) Your grade will be lowered by half a letter grade for every unexcused absence. Excused absences will only be granted for hospitalization, injury, family emergency (all of which require notification with 24 hours and documentation) and religious holidays.
- 4) Rain and traffic are NOT acceptable excuses for tardiness or absences.

Disabilities

Students will disability concerns MUST address these with me within the first week of class. Disability accommodations that may be awarded within the semester are not retro-active, per FIU Disability Services.

Email Policy

Students are encouraged to email me, but not about grades, due dates (or other information that is in the syllabus). Information about what was missed in class should be first directed to another classmate.

Cell Phones & Browsing

If there are issues with cell phones, this will be the result: At the beginning of class, all cell phones will be placed in one spot within the classroom that's agreed-upon by the class. This is a procedure sometimes used within the professional world. Not only does it take our minds off of the cell phones, but it also takes away the temptation to text. If you choose to use your phone, you may be asked to leave the room and not return. Internet browsing is something that you must self-police. Please see or email me if you have concerns about excessive browsing and I will take action.

Attitude

It's everything. We all have bad days, but we don't need to make our own issues known to the world. If you are having troubles that you think would make their way into the classroom, please let me know. In this class, let's support each other – and that means showing respect. Students who fail to do this will be asked to leave during that class period. Give respect. Get it.

Discussion of Sensitive Topics

At times, conversation in the course, and in journalism, advertising and public relations, may have offensive (or uncomfortable) tones. Covering such topics is a necessary part of the communicator's role in society and dealing with these topics is an element every communication professional will face at one time or another. Discussing these topics also is important to being a critical media user and member of society. However, this freedom to discuss issues of a sensitive nature does not allow for sexual harassment, racism and other forms of discrimination. If you have concerns about conversations in the classroom or the content shared, please discuss them with me. And, just to let you know, **in all facets of this course, you are responsible for your own education and knowledge-base.** I am here to help lead you in the "right direction(s)." That means, stopping by during workshop hours (or making appointments outside of those hours). If you have issues of concerns, I encourage you discuss them with me BEFORE proceeding to the Department Chair (this is not regarding concerns of sexual harassment, of physical safety, or of individualized harassment).

Academic Honesty

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of

others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning.

Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Misconduct includes: Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not.

Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

I expect ALL content created for this course, with the exception of archive material or stock footage used with my approval, to be original and created expressly for the purpose of this class, by you.

Any student who fails to meet these expectations will not only fail the course, but will also be reported to the Chair of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations and to the Dean of SJMC.

Course Schedule

1/14: Introduction to Mass Communication: Media & Cultural Messaging in Media and Strategic Communication

Course Objectives and Purpose of Theory in Strategic Communication

Visit eyesontherise.org

Watch “South Florida’s Rising Seas”

Discuss Course Outcomes

Identify Projects

1/21: Modes of Messaging: Community, Culture & Concepts

Understand Visual Storytelling Projects, Progress of eyesontherise.org

Read Transplanted Chicago, Preface through Chapter 2

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “What is Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 2007.

Stacks Chapter 2: Thinking About Theory

Pick Project

1/28: Mass Communication Research Approaches

Finish Reading Transplanted Chicago

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Vicious Assault Shakes Texas Town”: The politics of gender violence in *The New York Times’* coverage of a schoolgirl's gang rape,” *Journalism Studies*, 2013.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Perceived Similarity of Exemplar Traits and Behavior: Effects on Message Evaluation,” *Communication Research*, 2006.

Search Library databases for “Food fights for freedom: A critical reading of food advertisements from *Ladies’ Home Journal* during the Second World War,” *Advertising & Society Review*, 2015.

Stacks Chapters 3 (Thinking Quantitatively) and 4 (Thinking Qualitatively...)

Assessing Student Stories / Audiences / Advertising Approaches

2/4: What Are Audiences?

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Performing Somali Identity in the Diaspora: ‘Wherever I go I know who I am,’” *Cultural Studies*, 2010.

Search Library databases for “Sex as an advertising appeal: A review of its ethical basis, functions and effects,” *International Journal of Management Sciences*, 2014.

Stacks Chapters 8 (Cultivation Analysis...), 10 (Uses and Grats) and 11 (Spiral of Silence)

Connect with Students on Audiences for eyesontherise.org

2/11: Rhetoric & Persuasion

Read Media Control, Introduction through Chapter 3

Stacks Chapters 15 (Human Comm Theory and Research...), 16 (The Rhetorical Perspective...), 17 (Persuasion...)

Meet with audiences

Feedback on Project

Finish reading Media Control

Feedback from meeting with audiences

DUE: Media Control Feedback Paper

2/25: Agenda-Setting & Gatekeeping Through Narrative

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Gatekeeping Twitter: message diffusion in political hashtags,” *Media Culture & Society*, 2013.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “User-generated visibility: Secondary gatekeeping in a shared media space,” *New Media & Society*, 2013.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Zombies, drugs, & Florida weirdness: ‘Imaginative power’ & resonance in coverage of Miami’s ‘Causeway Cannibal,’” *Journalism Studies*, 2013.

Stacks Chapters 6 (Media Gatekeeping) and 7 (Agenda-setting)

3/4: Putting the Public (In)to (Media) Work

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “The Prevalence of and Consumer Response to Foreign and Domestic Brand Placement in Bollywood Movies,” *Journal of Advertising*, 2013.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Integrating Power? Evaluating Public Relations Influence in an Integrated Communication Structure,” *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 2013.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “The civility of social capital: Public relations in the public sphere, civil society, and democracy,” *Public Relations Review*, 2013.

Stacks Chapters 9 (Knowledge Gap), 19 (Modeling Cultures) and 24 (Watching Your Neighbor...)

SPRING BREAK

3/18: Cultural Theory: Power & the Public Sphere

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Media studies’ fascination with the concept of the public sphere: critical reflections and emerging debates,” *Media, Culture & Society*, 2013.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “The civility of social capital: Public relations in the public sphere, civil society, and democracy,” *Public Relations Review*, 2013.

Stacks Chapter 32 (Feminist Theory and Research)

Planning for Project

3/25: Advocacy & Speaking Against Media Influence: Applying Frequently Used Theories in PR & Advertising Research

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Applying the theory of planned behavior and media dependency theory: Predictors of public pro-environmental behavioral intentions in Singapore,” *Environmental Communication*, 2014.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Putting environmental infographics center stage: The role of visuals at the elaboration likelihood model’s critical point of persuasion,” *Science Communication*, 2014.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Whiter mass media power? Evidence for a critical elite theory alternative,” *Media, Culture & Society*, 2003.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Is there an elite hold? Traditional media to social media agenda setting influence in blog networks,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2009.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Perceptual, attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of organization-public engagement on corporate social networking sites,” *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 2014.

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Emotion-induced engagement in internet video advertisements,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2012.

Search Library databases for “Does explicit comparative advertising affect Indian consumers’ attitudes towards low and high-involvement product?,” *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 2015.

4/1: Environmental & Health Communication

Search Communication and Mass Media Complete for “Framing environmental advocacy: A study of 30 years of advertising in *National Geographic Magazine*,” *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 2012.

Lester Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

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Stacks Chapters 30 (PR and Integrated Communication), 31 (Health
Communication)

4/8: Understanding Environmental Communication

Lester Chapter 3, 4, 5

4/15: Discussing Engagement

Lester Chapters 6 and 7

4/22: Wrap-Up

DUE: Final Project, Advertising and Audience Analysis for eyesontherise.org

FINALS WEEK: TBA